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# WITH NO REGRETS

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

BY

† KRISHNA HUTHEESING

*'And time remember'd is grief forgotten'*

ILLUSTRATED



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**TO  
RAJA—MY HUSBAND**



## FOREWORD

I seldom consent to write a foreword, but as I have known Krishna Hutheesing since she was a child, I readily conceded her claim for my blessing on her sheaf of memories.

She undertook this book she tells us to solace the loneliness of those long anxious months following on the black Sunday last August that saw so many national workers, including almost her entire family, in prison.

With characteristic directness and complete candour she recounts the tale of her own young life for she is still quite young. She speaks of her happy if wayward childhood in a home of wealth and beauty, of her somewhat difficult and sometimes rebellious girlhood in surroundings strangely and unbelievably altered by the influence of the meek but oh! how mighty Mahatma, from a background of rich festivities to a battle camp of austere conflict and tremendous sacrifice. She gives us glimpses of her stay in Switzerland and an ailing sister-in-law, her travels with her father and brother in France and England, Germany and Russia, and mentions some famous people whom she met. She relates her experience as a Satyagrahi prisoner in a women's jail, and confides in us the romance of her unconventional courtship and marriage, her reactions to new modes of living in new cities and unfamiliar environments; she presents to us her two small sons, Harsha and Ajit, for whose sakes she has been persuaded to refrain from an active share in the current political movement. Here and there the leaves are stained with tears of bereavement for father, mother, and others dearly loved.



But this very personal narrative is closely woven into the fabric of the family history of the Nehrus. Therein, for the wider public will lie its special value and appeal. Has the history of the Nehrus not been for a quarter of a century, both a living symbol and an integral part of the story of the Indian struggle for freedom?

In this simple and intimate chronicle, we discover the magnificent Motilal Nehru—where shall we ever find his equal—in his most endearing and delightful role as the benevolent and genial patriarch and dictator of an adoring family, whom he loved with a surpassing devotion, which impressed Mahatma Gandhi as the most remarkable of his many great qualities.

Here, Jawaharlal, that passionate and intrepid crusader for world causes, doffs his armour and sheaths his fiery sword, and proves himself an incomparable exponent of many-sided relationship as son and brother, husband, father, friend and perfect playmate of little children.

Here too drawn in tender colours is the portrait of Jawahar's lovely and heroic wife Kamala, the pathos of whose brief life and the poignant tragedy of whose death have already passed into lyric and legend in the country.

Swarup, now called Vijayalakshmi, winds her way through the pattern of this tale like a gleaming thread of silver; and Indira floats before our eyes for a moment, a delicate vision in her saffron bridal robes.

But to me, most precious perhaps of all, is the remembrance of that tiny and exquisite, aged and suffering woman, Motilal's wife, Jawahar's mother in whom love and faith wrought so sweet a miracle of courage and endurance. She, who was carefully cherished and jealously guarded like a jewel in an ivory casket throughout her fragile youth and mid-

dle years, transformed herself in her frail old age into a gem-like flame of inspiration to guide those whose feet were set irrevocably on the steep and perilous paths of freedom.

Precious too, is the pendant picture of that older sister, widowed in childhood, who dedicated her life to the tireless service of the Nehru household, and who having fulfilled her last duties to her sister laid down her life within twenty-four hours after she died—undivided in death as in life.

Across the landscape of this moving family history fall the bright lights and the half lights, the dimmer and the deeper shadows inseparable from human destiny.

The printed word ends here, but, the living story of the Nehrus continues. The high traditions of patriotism created by an illustrious father and illustrious son will be duly honoured by the younger generations that succeeded them.

SAROJINI NAIDU



## INTRODUCTION

Great paintings need spare framing; the relevant beauty of the wood draws the eye nearer to the canvas and not to itself. Krishna Hutheesing adds occasional commentary, as a marginal setting, to reveal the depths of her narrative. The story is almost made to tell itself; it is the drama of a Great House, with characters who belong to history, as its inmates. But it is the history in which India lives, and which she is shaping to-day. The symbol of a million hearts, this House of Joy—*Anand Bhawan*—stands as a radiating centre of movements which have swept the land, and the creative abundance it has released easily transcends the sufferings of an awakened people. We have pictures with garden and laughter, of the morning hours; the full blaze of a united popular will fall on its crowded precincts; tragic and momentous events process in a people's destiny, and the house is strangely astir. There are pictures also of stillness and hushed hours, with blinds drawn upon intimate bereavements some of which yet were shared by a nation. In offering her devotion, a daughter of the house takes us to the courtyard and the corridors, we have glimpses of rooms in which deeds are being shaped with courage and self-searching; homely details no less than the intellectual atmosphere are given to us with precise art; and even when we leave the gates, we are never far from the spot to which this book has endeared us.

Fully portrayed here are figures of the father and the son. They are world-known. but it was left for the author to make them so real and so human

to us, with a familiar light denied to outsiders. No finer, truer art could have come to the aid of a writer than the touch of profound kinship and knowledge with which she has handled the theme. Through wonderful letters, memoried conversation, and quick transcript of events she tells us about her father, and her brother, and brings her narrative down to the present day when less is allowed to be told about them than ever before. Perhaps it is our sense of this intolerable obscurity which gives to each word about Jawaharlal Nehru an inexpressible glow; we read extracts from his recent letters, incomparable in their majesty and forgiveness, and in their sheer artistic power, with poignant delight.

But there are many unforgettable portraits in this book; the most tender and distinguished being those of the mother and of the aunt whom the author has adored. They live in the great house for ever, enshrined in our imagination. A number of brilliant sketches, apart from those of family members, live in the context of the author's most significant experiences.

Strangely enough, this is not a political book even though, in a sense, it is nothing but that. This is so, perhaps, because politics when it becomes one with our creative being, ceases to be merely political. It cannot then be viewed apart, or given a doctrinal or eventful significance. Of events and incidents there are plenty in this book; act by act they unfold even as India's destiny is enacted on the stage of our national civilisation. But they are never related extraneously; occasions which have shaken the whole country seem to appear inevitably in the setting of this chronicle. When millions are sharing an epical existence, and heroism is a daily event, political sensationalism and dire threats are shamed into inconsequence. This is particularly

true of a family in which dedicated lives have accepted uttermost trials and responsibilities, both individual and national, as part of a daily prerogative. Even when Krishna Hutheesing speaks on crucial issues, she preserves an "innocent eye," a detachment that can only come with the completest identification with the larger national purpose; so much so, that she can speak naturally about it. Her anger glows, and profound conviction welds her phrases as she opposes wrongs done to individuals and to a whole people, but so complete is her absorption in the inward humanity of events that readers, whose minds are immediately won, would hardly consider isolated facts excepting in strict relevance to an autobiographical narration.

An example of the author's power in fusing external episodes and an intimate personal sense of them, is the description of the Lucknow Central Prison. There she spent many months in company with unfortunate sisters who were detained not for the crime of loving one's motherland and for serving one's fellowbeings with the purest love and disinterestedness, but for actual crimes of violence. The story takes on a sublimity of pure expression; what the author sees, what she feels, her intellectual analysis of the complex issues involved in the present stage of our civilised sub-humanity, are all given but in a form which cannot be repeated and, therefore, must be read in the book. Politics, or sociology, call it what you will, is there, as it must be, but the story of Bachuli, easily transcends the false visions by which we classify principles and objectives in order to escape from a total human response. A darkened soul, crushed and then banished by a callous, irresponsible social order, calls to us. Correlated remedial measures and not retaliation, we feel, would be the answer that even a partially humanised society could give. The high,

jutting walls close upon the scene; the author takes a last look at the iron gates behind which dim figures would live out their years; the road outside, which her reluctant steps must pursue, becomes for the moment, unreal. The whole picture attains the validity of a concrete, universal experience. What the author does for after-care and penal reform, though full success cannot attend her efforts, lights up an area of our responsibility.

The reader will be grateful that this is a book of living lines, with the warm-tinted impressions of an artist who cares less to be competent than expressive. The writing, therefore, carries an air of improvisation, and an asymmetry which is never quite removed from living things. Arguments have not been drilled to precision angles; they are indeed, there by implication. Neither has all available material been collected or scheduled. The story carries the rhythm of an inner adventure, the scenes shift from one page to another, and the method of reminiscent reflection seems entirely adequate for enjoyment. How delightful that she can tell us of her wanderings in Europe; her work and escapades and artistic hobbies; that she can write about her own children and home and reveal a little of her husband's self-effacing life of service, giving us the sense of a secret shared together. For all this and more, the reader of this autobiography will feel grateful.

A beautiful picture in a simple frame, that is how we shall view this book. There is no reason why new and other types of pictures by the same hand will not be added—indeed, this story raises such an expectation. Artistically, this book is complete; but many of the lives which form its subject will continue to annex noble chapters to themselves, and these chapters will also belong to an entire India and new humanity. When the sequel is

written, as we hope it shall be, the blind mist which has been deliberately created to blacken the most sacred reputations will be dispelled. Clearer skies will allow details to be revealed regarding truths which no machine-ridden furies have been able to suppress. We shall welcome back, not to our hearts where they are already installed, but to our homes numerous individuals who by their striving for great human ideals, and by an unremitting personal sacrifice for the reconciliation of adverse forces, have illumined the path of future civilisation. But in our pain, and in our spiritual awakening, we shall to-day read this book and gather sustenance—the sustenance that the example of the supreme builder of the age, now suffering for us all, and the story of noble lives inspired by his unflinching moral purpose, have offered to a distracted mankind. This autobiographical record is a testimony to the faith which is inseparable from action, and which is in the words of Rabindranath, “the supreme courage of love.”

AMIYA CHAKRAVARTY



## CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD - <i>by Sarojini Naidu</i> -	v
INTRODUCTION <i>by Dr. Anniya Chakravarty, M.A., Ph.D. (Oxon)</i>	ix
ABOUT THIS BOOK - - - -	1
PROLOGUE - - - -	3
WITH NO REGRETS - - - -	9
TWO SISTERS - - - -	161
MEMORIES - - - -	164

## *ABOUT THIS BOOK*

Some years ago my husband asked me to write the book I had often thought of writing but I did not attempt it then. In March 1941 when Raja was imprisoned and I was left on my own, I decided to make an effort. I had written a couple of chapters when my elder son got typhoid and I could not carry on with my writing. Raja was released and we spent many anxious months while our child was ill. After he recovered I could not settle down to work at my book again.

Over a year passed. Raja was back in prison for an unknown period and I was left alone once again. The first few months were difficult and unsettled and it was not easy to adjust one's mind to any sort of work, but gradually one got used to new conditions. As the hours dragged heavily on my hands I decided to start on my book afresh. Being able to write down all the thoughts and memories that came flooding over me has in some measure helped to make these long lonely months a little less lonesome and more bearable. I have sorely missed my husband's guidance and my brother's rather stern criticism which I would gladly have welcomed. But it could not be. Had it not been for a friend of ours who always found time to help me in revising and giving valuable suggestions, I should not have been able to complete the work so quickly. His help, advice and never flagging interest has been of immense help to me, specially during those days when, dejected and depressed beyond words I did not feel like working at all.

I am deeply grateful to Dr. Amiya Chakravarty, or 'Amiya da' as I call him and whom I consider my 'guru.' For years he too has been asking me to write a book of reminiscences, but I felt I could not

do so. His unwavering faith in my ability to write made me somewhat nervous. Though I did not take his advice, Amiya da persisted with the idea every time he wrote to me and from within the gloomy walls of Yeravda Prison, Raja also encouraged me. So I undertook the task though not without a certain amount of hesitation.

Amiya da has done me the honour of writing the introduction to my book. For this as well as for all the encouragement and guidance he gave me I owe him a deep debt of gratitude.

To Mrs. Sarojini Naidu also are due my grateful thanks for having written the Foreword in spite of being far from well. I have known her for a very long time and her friendship and deep affection for my family is well known.

My thanks are also due to the *Statesman* for permitting me to re-produce the story of 'Bachuli' to *Visvabharati* for 'Memories' and to the *Hindu* for 'Two Sisters' all of which have appeared in their columns sometime ago.

## PROLOGUE

*"No, it is not yet night,  
Two or three are still standing guard ;  
But it is growing damned dark and perhaps  
They, the watchmen, too, will be slaughtered  
Before they see the morning."*

---PIERRE VAN PAASSEN

On August 9th 1942 precisely at 5 a.m. the Bombay police paid us a surprise visit armed with warrants of arrest for Jawahar and Raja. After many days of strenuous activity due to the meetings of the All India Congress Committee, we were all rather weary and fagged out. Till late at night all of us had been talking and discussing recent happenings. At mid-night our guests departed and Jawahar, Raja and I sat on talking for another hour. Then we went to bed.

To be awakened so early after a late night was bad enough, but to find the police on one's doorstep was anything but pleasant. Fast asleep though I was when the door-bell rang I woke up at once and I did not have to be told that the police had arrived. No one else would come at that ungodly hour except the police. I hurried to Jawahar's room as I thought the warrant was only for him. Terribly tired he could hardly keep his eyes open, nor could he collect his drowsy senses together. Within a few minutes the whole house was awake and when we had fully realised that the inevitable had happened we set about to help Jawahar get packed. Raja was also helping to get some books together when my niece Indira said "Raja bhai, why aren't you getting ready?" I turned round sharply and asked "What for?" "There is a warrant for him too," Indira told

us. Somehow we did not imagine that anyone except the members of the Working Committee would be arrested in the first round up but we were mistaken.

So Raja also got his things together and all too soon they were ready to go. We bade farewell to them and they were escorted to their respective cars by the police officials; Jawahar to an unknown destination and Raja to Yeravda Central Prison, Poona. We waved good bye and returned to the flat wondering what the future had in store for all of us this time.

We had many guests staying with us then and the flat was full to overflowing. Only two persons had gone away and yet everything seemed changed. Something was lacking, something vital had gone which seemed to have made the place alive before and barren and deserted now. For days the house had been full of people coming and going, and the stream of visitors continued now in an even increasing number. Friends, relations and war correspondents of all kinds and descriptions hovered around for details of the arrests. Still we missed those that had gone away and our thoughts were with them constantly.

Many a time the same thing had happened but one could not get accustomed to it. Each time it left one a little bewildered and a little lonely.

For a year now, those near and dear to me have been away, imprisoned behind grim walls and iron bars. Even sight of them has been denied. But their absence, though creating a great void in my life, does not make me despair or falter. I am convinced that the cause for which they have been incarcerated is a just and right one and that they must suffer for it is inevitable.

A year is not a very long time in the life of an individual much less in the life of a nation. But

sometimes the year lengthens itself out and each month seems to be an enormous period of time. I have gone through several great movements and who knows how many more one might still have to face. Throughout all these years not only I but countless numbers of our comrades have gone through periods of varying emotions. We have experienced moments of great exultation and moments of great depression. Sometimes we have been surrounded by shadows and darkness unable to find a way out. At other times streaks of light have pierced the darkness that enveloped us and given us new hope and courage to carry on with our struggle.

During all these months of chaos and loneliness many memories have come crowding into my mind. Just to keep my mind occupied I started scribbling them down and gradually these memories and reminiscences have taken the shape of a book. Writing it I have re-lived many of the days of my childhood and onwards. They have been pleasant memories and sad ones, and I have laughed as well as wept over many an incident of days gone by. They have given me some pleasure, a great deal of peace and often a little heartache.

During my childhood I had lived a serene peaceful life. We were a small compact family and our little world was a happy one untouched by sorrow or hardships. Gradually our lives had to undergo many changes but we remained together, so nothing mattered. As time passed, force of circumstances made us scatter. But life went on and we continued to live adapting ourselves to new ways and new methods and making ourselves mentally and physically stronger to face whatever might come our way.

Some few months ago—I wrote to Jawahar ‘somewhere in India’ and commented on all the changes that had taken place in our family during

the last fifteen years. His reply gives a vivid picture of all that was, is and may be, and shows how life affected us. Yet in spite of the odds we have had to fight against, we do not regret anything. He writes:—

“You write of 1928 and of our compact family then: now many of our loved ones are dead and the others scattered and isolated unable even to see each other. That lesson repeated in each generation has to be learnt by each generation through personal experience. Integration follows disintegration, but each integration is perhaps on a higher level than the previous one, for it carries subconsciously somewhere the memory of past successes and failures. The burden of the past pursues us, and yet it is both a burden and an inspiration, for it drags us down and at the same time pushes us on. Sometimes we feel vital and youthful and full of energy; at other times thousands of years weigh us down and we feel old and a little weary at this long and interminable pilgrimage. Both are part of us and make us what we are and out of that ceaseless intermingling and conflict something new is always arising. We, who are children of ancient civilizations with hundreds of passionate generations behind us with all their struggles and contentment, their dynamics and statics, feel this more than people of a later day who have not these complex pasts pursuing them. We have much that gives an equilibrium to the mind and spirit, a calm and unhurried outlook on life which refuses to get flurried and flustered at changing events. That essentially is the hallmark of ancient culture; it is that, that China has in abundant measure: it is this, I believe, that India also possesses. And because of this, it will be well with India.

When I was a child, I remember our family consisting of twenty persons or more, all living together

as joint families do. I saw that large family disintegrate and then each part form itself into a nucleus of integration; and yet silken bonds of affection and common interests joined those separate parts and there was always an integration of the large whole. That process continues and normally you would hardly notice it, but when events hasten it, there is a shock. Think of what happened in China during the past five years and of the cataclysm that has overwhelmed hundreds of thousands of families. Yet the nation lives, more vital than ever, and individuals are born and grow and carry on the tradition of the race and humanity in spite of war and catastrophe. I sometimes feel that we in India would be the better for some such mass experience. Anyway we are having our own experience and thus building up slowly but surely a new nation."





## WITH NO REGRETS

*"Verse, a breeze 'mid blossoms straying  
Where hope clung feeding like a bee  
Both were mine! Life went a-maying  
With Nature, Hope and Poesy  
When I was young"*

—COLERIDGE

It was a bitterly cold morning in November 1907 when I was born in the sacred City of Prayaga or Allahabad as it is now known. The whole house was lit up brightly and humming with activity even at a fairly late hour of the night, for my mother was having rather a bad time and everybody was anxiously awaiting the birth of the baby. After a great deal of trouble I was born, a big, fat, healthy infant, little realising that I had almost cost my frail little mother her life in the very process of coming into this world. For weeks afterwards my mother hovered between life and death while, left to the tender mercies of nurses and others, I thrived as a normal baby should.

Mother recovered slowly, but remained a semi-invalid for a long time. It was hardly possible for her to look after me. So I continued to be cared for by nurses and an aunt of mine. When I was about three years old, the English governess who looked after my sister Swarup took charge of me also. My brother Jawahar is eighteen years older than I and my sister seven years older. So I grew up almost like an only child with no companionships, nor anything in common with my brother or sister. The former I did not even know as he was away in England when I was born and I first made my acquaintance with him when I was five years old.

When I was born my father had already made

a name for himself as a great lawyer and was a wealthy man. Father bought Anand Bhawan, our home, when Jawahar was ten years old. The site on which it stands is supposed to be very sacred as it is presumed to have been the place where Rama and Bharat met when the former returned from his fourteen years' exile. Nearby is the Bharadwaj Ashram where in ancient days there used to be a University and which is still a place of pilgrimage. Our house always attracted crowds specially during the great Kumbh Mela held every twelve years in Prayaga. Lakhs of people flocked to the sacred city to bathe in the 'sangam.' During this time the crowds that visited our house were so large that it was impossible to control them. They used to scatter all over the compound where they rested for a while. Every year smaller crowds came on their pilgrimage to attend the Magh Mela. Few returned to their villages or towns without visiting our home. They came partly because it was a sacred place and partly through curiosity, to have a look at the people they had heard so much about, like father and Jawahar.

Anand Bhawan, is a large rambling house with big verandahs all round and a huge garden. On one side of the house was a lawn, at the back a fruit garden, in front was a long stretch of another lawn with a summer house and a tennis court. Inside the summer house was an image of Shiva placed high on the large stones which were placed one on top of the other to make it look like a miniature mountain. From Shiva's head a tiny stream trickled down into a pool at the foot of it, and lovely flowers grew all around. In summer, this place was delightfully cool and I loved it. Later on when our new house was built, the summer house was demolished as it obstructed the new building. Father had many horses, dogs, cars and carriages and was

very fond of hunting and riding. I used to love strolling around the stables and looking at the horses. I had my own pony—a beautiful snow-white creature—for whom many people had offered father large sums of money. I did not keep him long, for one day he died in his stable—bitten by a snake! It was a terrible tragedy for me as I loved him dearly, and for many weeks I grieved over his loss.

During my childhood we almost always had relations staying with us. Sometimes there were children too and I enjoyed having them to play with. I marvelled how mother even from her sick bed could look after all the people in the house and how father in spite of all his work could find time to spend a few minutes with each and everyone and see that they were comfortable and happy. He was like a shepherd who though apparently unconcerned, kept a vigilant eye on all his flock and he did it to perfection.

Some years before I was born, there had been a little son who had not lived, and mother had never reconciled herself to his loss. When I was born, my mother was sorely disappointed, but to father it made little difference. I had a strange lonely childhood with few playmates. Adhering to strict rules and regulations, every minute of my life was planned out from the minute I woke up to the time I went to bed. I resented it very much, more so because other children I knew were allowed more freedom by their parents and had no governess to lay down hard and fast rules. I resented the authority which my governess exercised over me and very often I disobeyed her, for I was not only stubborn, but had rather a wild temper which more often than not got the better of me. It is quick to get roused, but fleeting and childish. It seldom lasts for a long time and holds no malice, but it frequently leads me into a great deal of unnecessary trouble!

To be punished, locked up alone or be deprived of my supper was a frequent occurrence with me but it rarely happened to my sister. She was always obedient and docile, most probably because it was less troublesome to obey than to disobey. Yet in spite of my resentment and my tantrums, I loved my governess deeply and I knew she was very fond of me too.

As a child I saw very little of my parents. Father was always very busy and I saw him only for a short while in the mornings and again in the evenings. I saw mother more often, but did not have much to do with her. When she was well, mother could never sit quietly, and always had to be doing some housework in spite of a fleet of servants waiting to carry out her smallest commands. I loved her very much and worshipped her loveliness, but many a time my childish heart grieved because I felt she did not care for me as much as I should have liked.

Jawahar, my brother, was the apple of her eye and she made no secret of her love for him. Father was no less proud and fond of Jawahar, may be even more so than mother, but he was less demonstrative about it as he had a tremendous sense of justice and fairness and he did not want any one of us to feel that the other was a favourite. In this he succeeded. Yet, constantly hearing a great deal in praise of Jawahar, I became rather jealous of him, and was not sorry because he was away from home.

My sister Swarup was very lovely and was spoilt by everybody, but somehow of her I was never jealous. I took it for granted that anyone as beautiful as she was, should naturally be made much of, and I was exceedingly fond of her.

My childhood was one of clock-like regularity. I started the day by going for a ride every morning which I loved and still do to this day. Father was

a fine horse-man and had a good stable. All three of us, Jawahar, Swarup and I learnt to ride almost as soon as we learnt to walk and we were all very fond of it, though we rarely get a chance to ride now. After my ride, I had lessons with my governess in a corner of our enormous garden. The whole morning thus passed until lunch time. After lunch I had to rest, a most annoying process—then a piano lesson and some more lessons to end up with. In the evening we went out for a drive every day, in a carriage drawn by two Burmese ponies which were the pride of my father's heart. For the rest, the evenings were usually dull. Cinemas were not in fashion as they are today and I was very rarely permitted to see one. An occasional visit to a circus or a fair was considered more than enough. Today my own little sons seven and eight years old know more about both Indian and American films than I knew at the age of twelve! Sometimes I had a few friends to play with but not often. So I amused myself roaming about the spacious grounds of our home, wondering a great deal about life in general but always keeping my thoughts to myself. For, I had learnt at an early age that "children should be seen and not heard, and being inquisitive and asking too many questions was a sign of bad manners." So I never got an outlet to express myself, and although my head was full of hundreds of questions that I was aching to ask, I did not have the chance to do so.

Swarup was five years old when she went to England with our parents and it was there that father had engaged our governess Miss Hooper. She was a very fine person with extremely good qualifications and came from a very good family. She belonged to the old school which believed in stern discipline and unswerving obedience. Swarup was easy to handle, but I having inherited all the stubbornness not only of my father but also of a long

line of ancestors, was quite a problem. No punishment was too severe to make me give in, and yet one gentle reproof was sufficient to make me ashamed of myself and to be only too eager to do as I was asked. Unfortunately reproofs were rare and punishments frequent. Thus I grew up from a lonely child to an awkward, shy girl, longing to be made much of, hungering for knowledge, but never attaining it except by the beaten track. (My parents remained more or less strangers to me and I did not know my brother at all.) My sister was the only person with whom I came in contact daily, apart from my governess whom I adored and hated by turns.

The first great event in my life was the return of my brother from England in 1912. He was a complete stranger to me, and though I felt no joy at the prospect of his home-coming, I was curious to see what he was like. Weeks before his arrival my parents were busy making preparations to welcome home their son and heir. Mother was unable to conceal her joy and lived in a fever of excitement—she rushed backwards and forwards all day long, seeing that all was in perfect order for the beloved son. I remember how happy she looked during these days—how her face glowed with a radiance I had never seen before. It irritated me sometimes beyond measure that my mother should dote thus on a mere son! Today I understand so well how she felt at that time. Even my sister flitted about the house with an air of eager expectancy which was most exasperating to me. I made up my mind to dislike Jawahar thoroughly.

At last the great day arrived and the atmosphere of suppressed excitement throughout the house affected even me, but only with more curiosity. It was summer and we were at the hill station, Mussoorie. At the expected hour we heard horses'

hoofs clattering up the drive and, everybody ran outside to meet Jawahar. My heart sank a little when I saw a handsome young man, so very like mother to look at, ride up towards us. He jumped down from his horse. First he embraced mother, then greeted all the others in turn. I stood at a distance trying to make up my mind whether or not to like the new brother who had suddenly descended on us. While many thoughts crowded in my mind I was lifted up in Jawahar's arms and heard him say "So this is the baby sister? She is quite a little lady now." He kissed me and put me down as abruptly as he had picked me up--then forgot all about me the very next minute.

The first few months of our acquaintanceship were anything but pleasant. Jawahar was an awful tease for when he had nothing to do, he spent his time playing pranks on me. He made me do all sorts of things I most disliked or feared. When I least expected it he would shower me with gifts and be exceedingly sweet, so that it was not possible to remain annoyed with him for long. Even so I remained aloof and did not grow very fond of him.

The World War I, did not affect my quiet and sometimes monotonous life. The only change I found in our household was that mother went more often to clubs and sat with a lot of Indian and foreign women knitting things for soldiers. I also noticed father and Jawahar getting very agitated over some war news every now and then.

In 1916 Jawahar got married. For months preparations had been going on, for the wedding was to be held with great pomp and splendour. The house was full of jewellers, merchants and tailors coming in and out throughout the day, and numerous clerks were busy planning out details and making arrangements.

The marriage was to take place in Delhi, the



bride's home, and the bridegroom's party left Allahabad a week before the wedding day—on a day that was considered auspicious. Father took over a hundred guests with him and we went by a special train which was beautifully decorated. Hundreds of other guests joined us in Delhi. As even several houses could not hold our guests, father had numerous tents put up for everyone and in a week's time a little colony of tents cropped up. It was called the "Nehru Wedding Camp."

Delhi was bitterly cold in those days, but I loved it and had a grand time. Many cousins whom I had not seen before came from all parts of India and I enjoyed playing with them. Each day there was a party somewhere or the other and after ten days, the wedding party returned to Allahabad where there were some more festivities.

Jawahar made a handsome bridegroom and Kamala was one of the loveliest brides I have ever seen. In November 1917 their only daughter Indira was born.

Life was uneventful till 1917. That year my governess got engaged to an English friend of hers and wanted to get married fairly soon. All her people were in England so father naturally offered to give her away in church. I was greatly excited at the prospect of a wedding and at acting bridesmaid, but I was also unhappy at the idea of parting from my governess. All the things I disliked about her were forgotten. I only remembered the love and care she had lavished on me for all those years. She had been with us for twelve long years and was looked upon as one of our family. We were all very fond of her and she in her turn was devoted to us.

The wedding day dawned and I was miserable. Everything went off beautifully and she was very pleased with all that father had done for her. After the wedding she left on her honeymoon and I was

inconsolable for days. It was the first heartbreak of my young life. But childish griefs pass quickly and I got used to her absence. Soon I began to enjoy my newly acquired freedom, for I could do more or less as I liked, and was left to my own resources a great deal.

I had always wanted to go to school and study with other children, but my father had never approved of the idea. He thought it was the correct thing to have lessons in solitary grandeur with a governess. The necessary qualifications for a young lady in those days was to learn how to play the piano or some other musical instrument, and be able to carry on a conversation and mix well in society. My sister had never been to school and had been educated at home. But I do not think she ever wished to go, whereas I did. When our governess got married I tried hard to persuade father to allow me to join school. At first he was adamant and wanted me to have another governess. Several of them came but fortunately they did not stay. At last father gave in very grudgingly and I went to school. The school that was chosen for me was supposed to be just the right thing—a very select little place for young ladies and little men. There were mostly English children before I joined, but later on many Indian children joined it too.

It was the beginning of a new life for me and I enjoyed every minute of it. Games and studies took up all my time and I never had time to feel lonely any more. Life seemed too good to be true and some of the happiest days of my childhood were my school days. After a few short years, they came to rather an abrupt end.

And so I grew up in an atmosphere of security and peace in a home I adored.

*"Ah ! for a change 'twixt Now and Then !"*

—COLERIDGE

Since the departure of our governess, Swarup had looked after me, as mother was too delicate to do so. She was seldom strict with me and more often than not I did just as I pleased. That was less trouble for her and it suited me. I was very fond of poetry and so was she. Many a delightful evening we spent sitting in the garden, she reading out aloud and I listening to her with rapt attention. A bond existed between us that was rare and beautiful. Swarup was my guide, philosopher and friend during those days of my childhood.

In 1921 my sister got married. Her marriage was a very grand affair—done in the correct Kashmiri style. We had hundreds of guests, friends and relations staying with us as well as the entire Congress Working Committee which was holding one of its meetings in Allahabad. I had a gorgeous time during those days with hardly any one to bother about me or tell me what to do or what not to do. I was unhappy at the idea of parting from my sister, but I was also delighted with the wedding festivities.

The local Congress workers wanted to benefit by the presence of the Congress leaders and had organised a district conference. Large numbers of peasants from surrounding villages came to attend the conference and Allahabad, which is normally a sleepy old town, was full of activity and excitement. This had a strange effect on the English residents of the town who were worried by the political awakening of the country and expected some violent uprising. We could not then understand their fears and strange behaviour. However, we discovered later that May 10th the day fixed for my sister's

marriage was by coincidence the anniversary of 1857.

It was during these days that I decided to give up eating meat. I was very fond of it and one day Mahadeo Bhai Desai (Gandhiji's Secretary) saw me having my lunch. He was quite upset at the sight of the different kinds of meat before me and there and then gave me a long sermon on becoming a vegetarian. I was not easily won over but Mahadeo Bhai persisted day after day whenever he caught sight of me. I gave it up in the midst of all the wedding festivities much to the distress of everyone except my mother. She was overjoyed. She disliked meat and would never touch it of her own free will. During her illness she was forced to take soups or meat in some form or other. For three years I did not touch any meat though I often longed for it. Then I went one Christmas to spend a week or so with some cousins. Seeing them all eat meat was too great a temptation and I succumbed.

After Swarup left home, I was rather miserable and lonely. There was of course my sister-in-law Kamala, who was of the same age of Swarup and in some ways she took Swarup's place. It was at this time that I saw more of father and got to know him better. He too, guessing that I missed Swarup gave me as much of his companionship as he could. I was just learning to know and love him more than I had ever done before when he was arrested for the first time and our brief period of companionship came to an end.

The first time I met Gandhiji was early in 1919. He had come to Allahabad at father's request to have some discussions with him. I had heard much about 'Bapu' as Gandhiji is called but to me he seemed a mythical figure. I was very young and could not easily grasp all he stood for. His ideas seemed rather fantastic. When I saw him for the first time

I thought he was uninteresting. I had expected to see someone tall and strong with flashing eyes and a firm step. Instead I saw a thin, almost starved looking man, a little bent, wearing a loin-cloth and leaning on a stick, meek looking and very gentle. I was most disappointed. Was this the little man, I wondered, who was going to do great deeds for our country and free it from foreign domination?

I had heard and read much about the gruesome details of Jallianwala Bagh and young though I was, I wanted to take revenge. But to me revenge meant paying back in the same coin by violence and bloodshed. When I heard of Bapu's idea of non-violence I thought it was fantastic and that no one, least of all a whole nation could practise it. Besides there is a streak of perversity in my nature and because nearly everyone I knew seemed to worship Bapu and existed to carry out his smallest behests, I put on an appearance of indifference which sorely grieved my mother. At heart I admired and loved Bapu but I refused to treat him as others did, as a saint or a superman.

The more I saw of him, the more I was drawn towards him. At times he seemed to be to belong to a different sphere and yet he was very much of this earth and could appreciate things that are earthly. With his gentle eyes and winning smile he won me over as he did millions of others not for the moment only, but for our entire lives. For, allegiance once given to Bapu, when given whole-heartedly can never waver.

In 1920 Gandhiji launched the Satyagraha Movement and with its advent not only my life, but that of our entire family and of hundreds of others changed completely. One of the items of the movement was the boycott of British schools. I had been so absorbed with my studies and my own little world that I had hardly noticed the incoming storm or the

changes that were taking place around me in my own home. So it came as rather a blow when father sent for me one day and having explained the situation told me that I must leave school. I was attached to the school and had made many friends there. The idea of giving it up made me unhappy for a while, though I realised that that was the only right thing to do. It was not opportune to join another school just then, so father arranged for tutors to come and teach me at home. For weeks I was unsettled and unhappy having nothing much to do, but life moved fast in those days and soon I also got caught up in the whirlpool of events that were to change the very face of our country.

Something new happened everyday to change my once dull and monotonous life of strict routine into an ever-changing and exciting day to day existence, never knowing what was going to happen next. Jawahar wanted to join Gandhiji. My father wanted to think over all the pros and cons before he took the plunge. Jawahar's mind, however, was made up and he pledged himself to the Satyagraha Movement. He did not do it without a great mental conflict. Jawahar felt that Satyagraha under Gandhiji's leadership was the only way to attain freedom. But it was no easy task to get father to give his full consent to his joining Bapu. Father did not take to Gandhiji's ideas quickly and though he had given much consideration to the proposed movement, he did not like it very much. He did not then see any sense in going to prison and neither did he like the idea of Jawahar courting arrest. The pilgrimage to prison had not yet begun. Father loved Jawahar deeply and the very idea of his son having to suffer hardships and go to prison was far from pleasant.

For many days a conflict took place in both Jawahar's and father's minds. There were long discussions and sometimes heated words. Both spent

tortured days and nights trying each in his own way to convince the other. Father was distressed at Jawahar's determination to follow Bapu. We discovered later that he used to try sleeping on the floor to find out what it felt like, for he thought that that was what Jawahar would have to do. These were most unhappy days for all of us, especially for mother and Kamala, who could not bear to see father and son torn by politics and endless arguments. The atmosphere was tense all the time and one hardly dared to utter a word for fear of rousing father's anger or irritating Jawahar.

The happenings in the Punjab and the tragedy of Jallianwala Bagh however brought father round to a great extent to Jawahar's way of thinking. It was then that his son's unswerving purpose and complete faith in the cause of Satyagraha as well as the great love he bore his only son, brought conviction to father. He decided to throw in his lot with Jawahar and follow Gandhiji. But before doing so, he gave up his large practice at the Bar. This changed our life which until then had been of ease and luxury, to one of simplicity and a little hardship.

Father had earned millions and had also spent lavishly, never hoarding up money for a rainy day. When he gave up practice we immediately had to bring about certain changes in the household, as it was not possible to live as we had been doing with no income at all. The first thing father did was to sell his horses and carriages. It was not easy for him to do this for he loved his horses dearly and was proud of them—but it had to be done. Then we had to dismiss quite a few of the army of servants we had and curtail expenses in every direction. There were no more banquets; only one cook instead of two or three, and no more smart butlers with numerous bearers as their satellites. All our lovely

Dresden and Venetian china and glass and many other articles both expensive and beautiful were sold off and we had to get used to fewer servants and less of the luxuries of daily life. I was too young to mind, but it must have been very hard on the others, specially my parents.

Just before all these changes occurred in our lives, a curious incident happened. We had many outhouses behind our house where coal, wood and other things used to be stored up. A huge cobra used to live in one of the outhouses where the wood was kept. Ever since I could remember it had been there. It molested no one and the servants went there unhesitatingly even late at night. Often the cobra could be seen gliding away along the garden or round about the outhouses. No one was scared or bothered about it. The popular superstition was that so long as it was there, guarding the interest of the family no harm could come to our house, only wealth and prosperity would be ours.

Sometime in 1920, just before father gave up his practice, a new servant who did not know of the existence of the cobra saw it one evening. He got thoroughly scared and together with some others he killed it. All our old servants were horrified and so was mother but the deed was done. Soon after, changes took place. Our luxurious home turned into a much simpler abode and Jawahar and father went to prison. The servants attributed our bad luck, as they called it then, to the death of the cobra!

For my father non-co-operation meant breaking away completely from his old life and trying to refashion it at the age of sixty. It meant a break not only from professional and political colleagues, but from life-long friends who could not see eye to eye with him or Bapu. It meant giving up many comforts. And he had always lived well. But once



father was convinced that this was the right path he threw in his lot whole-heartedly and never gave the past a thought.

Each day father and Jawahar got more and more immersed in politics. Our home where life had run so smoothly before was now always in a state of chaos. Numerous Congress workers came from all parts of the country to stay a few days and discuss matters. Meetings were held almost daily and there was a never ending stream of people in and out of the house. I had always been used to a great many people visiting my parents, but they were of a different type. They came in smart cars or carriages drawn by lovely horses each vying with the other in showing off their pomp and splendour. After the movement started quite a few of our wealthy friends kept away, and where one saw riches and wealth before one now saw khadi-clad men and women, simple and humble. Each one bore within his or her heart an unconquerable determination, an undaunted courage to serve and free the country, and if need be, die for it.

In 1921 matters came to a head and the British Government started its campaign of whole-sale arrests. Our people were prepared for it and rallied in their thousands. Prison until then was still something vague and unknown though very soon it was to become a second home to many of them. At this time the Prince of Wales came to visit India and was due to visit Allahabad also. A few days before he came my father received a communication from the District Magistrate of Allahabad calling upon him to allow the use of his grounds, such as closing of the gates at a given time, admission of visitors etc. Father replied saying that the Magistrate had no authority over the use of his own property and he would make such use of it as he thought lawful and proper. Father assured him that as a non-co-ope-

rator he would see to it that no harm befell the Prince of Wales during his visit to Allahabad. For this assurance he was rewarded by being arrested. One evening we heard that there was going to be a general round up and that all the leaders and prominent workers were going to be arrested. That same evening—it was the 6th December 1921—the police paid their first visit to Anand Bhawan with warrants of arrest for father and Jawahar. Since then they have come quite frequently, either to arrest some member of our family or to search the house for imaginary banned literature. More often they came to confiscate our cars and relieve us of lot of surplus furniture in realisation of fines.

The arrival of the police that evening caused quite a stir in our household. Some of the old servants were most indignant and wanted to beat up the police and throw them out of the compound. But mother warned them not to behave stupidly. All of us were rather distressed at the suddenness of the arrests, all except father and Jawahar. The idea of our loved ones being put behind prison bars worried us. We did not know what hardships were in store for them. It was hardest of all for my mother to whom the past few months of constant change had been a sort of nightmare she had not quite fathomed. But she was a brave wife and a still more brave mother. On no account would she allow the others to see how wretched she felt at that moment. Father and Jawahar got ready and bade us farewell. Then entering the police car they were driven away to the District jail. Mother and Kamala smiled bravely as they parted from their husbands, but though their smile was courageous there was sadness and loneliness in their hearts. We turned back into the house when the car was out of sight, but the home that a moment ago had been

so full of life suddenly seemed ever so quiet and bereft of all joy.

Father, Jawahar and others were tried on the 7th December 1921, before the District Magistrate. The Government Advocate who opened the case for the prosecution was an Indian, a very old friend and comrade of father's. He did not have the courage to refuse to prosecute father or to resign his job, but I have never seen a man look more ashamed or nervous than he did during the trial. Throughout he kept his eyes averted and never once looked straight at father. He conducted the proceedings in a low almost inaudible voice. Before, that almost every day he used to meet father—shared his hospitality and enjoyed all the privileges of a friend. But all this was forgotten when father was arrested. Father and Jawahar were both sentenced to six months' simple imprisonment. Father sent the following message to his comrades after he was sentenced.

"Having served you to the best of my ability whilst working amongst you, it is now my high privilege to serve the motherland by going to jail with my only son. I am fully confident that we shall meet again at no distant date as free men. I have only one parting word to say—continue non-violent non-co-operation without a break until Swaraj is attained. Enlist as volunteers in your tens and hundreds and thousands. Let the march of pilgrimage to the only temple of liberty now existing in India, *viz.*, the jail, be kept in an uninterrupted stream—swelling in strength and volume as each day passes, adieu."

This was the beginning of a new life—a life of uncertainty, of sacrifice, of heart-ache and sorrow. Everything seemed worthwhile when the cause we were fighting for was such a great and noble one. Each one of us hated parting from father and Jawahar, but we were proud of them for doing their

duty and standing by their country in her hour of need.

After their arrest, we received frequent visits from the police. It became quite a habit with them to come every few days and nose around the whole house. Every time they came they attached some piece of furniture or other movable objects in lieu of a fine. They were not very particular about what they took and it did not hurt their conscience at all to take away a carpet when all they had to realise was five hundred rupees. At first I used to boil with anger and resentment. Later on I got used to it.

While father and Jawahar were in jail, the Congress session was held in Ahmedabad. Gandhiji was then out of jail and he asked mother and Kamala to attend the session. So we decided to go, mother, Kamala, her little daughter Indira and I. Some of our cousins whose husbands were also in jail accompanied us. We travelled third-class for the first time. It was a novel experience although later on we got used to it. The journey was far from comfortable and it was very long. But it was interesting and I for one enjoyed it. It was an education in itself and for the first time I realised how deep-rooted was the faith and affection that the masses had for Gandhiji and other Congress leaders. At each and every station, no matter how late or how early the hour, large crowds surrounded our compartment. They flooded us with flowers and food and tried to show in a hundred simple ways that they appreciated the sacrifice that the leaders were making to win Swaraj for the people. I marvelled at the faith of the masses, at the great love they showered on us, because they believed, we were helping to free them from the foreign yoke. Unquestionably and unhesitatingly they were willing to leave the shaping of their destinies in the hands of one little man. And this man was Gandhiji.

So after an unforgettable journey we reached Sabarmati Ashram of which we had heard so much but knew so little. Gandhiji gave us a most affectionate welcome and after inquiring about father's and Jawahar's health, he asked someone to show us to our rooms. We stayed in a sort of hostel for students, very bare and unadorned and not too comfortable. We had to sleep in a large room all together and only mother had a room to herself. It was very cold in December but we had to get up at 4 a.m. to attend prayers, then bathe, wash our own clothes, spend some time with Bapu and do as we liked for the rest of the day. Having to wake up so early was rather a difficult task for the first few days. But it was worth the trouble, for the prayers held on the banks of the Sabarmati were very beautiful and I did not like to miss them a single day.

The Ashram was composed of several small cottages scattered about. The main central cottage belonged to Bapu. Others were occupied by Mahadeo Desai and nephews of Gandhiji and other workers. Several families shared a cottage. Usually everyone slept on the floor which was not at all to my liking though I soon got used to it. The food we had was very simple, much too simple in fact. It had no *masalas*, no ingredients to make it tasty, it was simply boiled. All of us found it very difficult to eat it at first. I for one was perpetually hungry and looked forward to going home and having a square meal.

We had to wash our own clothes at the Ashram. It was no joke washing thick khadi, and in those days the saris we wore were terribly coarse. Mother and an elderly cousin of mine were given a young boy to do their washing for them, but the rest of us had to do it ourselves. The first few attempts were none too successful but by the time we were ready

to return home, some of our party had become quite adept at washing clothes. I was not one of them.

We stayed in Ahmedabad for a fortnight and then returned home. We had almost the same experience coming back as we had had on our way there. Living at the Ashram and being able to see quite a lot of Bapu was a grand experience and one that will remain fresh in my memory always. Quite a few people used to come to Bapu and ask him to solve their personal problems. It was hardly fair of them to have done so, and I never understood why Bapu took it upon himself to give them advice on personal problems. If things did not work out as expected, poor Bapu was blamed.

Father and Jawahar had been sentenced to six months' imprisonment the first time. Soon after our return from Ahmedabad, Jawahar was released after serving only three months of his sentence. He did not remain free very long, for in six short weeks he was back in jail. Since then going in and out of jail has become an incurable habit with most of the members of my family.

Life went on thus, day after day and month after month. I studied at home and apart from paying frequent visits to the jails we did not travel much. In 1923 all political prisoners were released and it was good to have father and Jawahar home again and to hear father's infectious laughter ringing throughout the house that had remained silent so long. Once again there came about some semblance of a quiet normal life at Anand Bhawan.

*"The world is equal to the child's desire  
Who plays with pictures by his nursery fire !  
How vast the world by lamplight seems ! How small  
When memory's eyes look back, remembering all—"*

—CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

Jawahar was arrested in Nabha State towards the end of 1923. Soon after his release when he returned home, he developed typhoid and for a month or more was dangerously ill. When he recovered we breathed a little more freely.

There was a break in the usual sojourn to prison and we were able to see a little more of each other. It was at the conclusion of the Gaya Congress that father together with C. R. Das conceived the idea of the Swaraj Party. The first meeting of the party was held at Anand Bhawan. C. R. Das became the President and father was the General Secretary.

In June 1925, C. R. Das died and father was elected President of the Swaraj Party. C. R. Das was not only a trusted colleague of father's but a very dear friend and his death was a great shock to father. Father was busy with the Assembly where as the leader of the Opposition and of the Swaraj Party he had his work cut out for him. In March 1926, father led the walkout of the Swaraj Party from the Assembly at its Delhi Session in obedience to the Party mandate, which arose out of the Government's attitude over certain reforms. The speech father gave on this occasion was superb. Often during those days I used to visit him for a week or so in Delhi and attend the Assembly. I was exceedingly proud of father in his spotless white khadi, looking very dignified and aristocratic. I admired the way he handled difficult problems and the many questions put to him during the session. He was

stern and uncompromising when it came to giving in to anything after his party had once come to a decision. Sometimes he took his colleagues to task unmercifully for some error committed or for some weakness that should not have been exhibited! In spite of his rather autocratic behaviour those who knew and understood him, loved and admired him greatly. His enemies feared him and preferred to keep out of his way.

I liked attending these Assembly Sessions when a heated debate was on. Sometimes when father gave 'At Homes' or dinners, as mother was not present, I used to act hostess for him—and how I enjoyed helping him receive his guests.

My husband's uncle, Kasturbhai Lalbhai, a well-known millowner was also a member of the Assembly in those days and Raja, my husband, used to stay with him sometimes. Raja claims to have met me there once and to have decided that he would marry me. Unfortunately, I do not remember having met him, a point which even now annoys Raja. I am not sorry, however, that he made up his mind to marry me almost eight years before the event.

Towards the end of 1925 Kamala fell seriously ill. For many years she had been ailing and had caused Jawahar and my parents considerable anxiety. The doctors suggested taking her away to Switzerland for treatment. In March 1926 Jawahar sailed for Europe taking his wife and daughter Indira with him. With them also went my sister Swarup and her husband Ranjit. They were going on a vacation which they had planned long ago.

Father had also planned to go to Europe in June of the same year and I was to accompany him. He had had no holidays for many years and with all the strenuous work he had been doing he felt he needed a little rest and change.

Unfortunately, at the last moment he had to



cancel his passage due to a very important case that had been pending and could not be postponed to a later date. He had accepted this case while he was still practising at the Bar. Much as he disliked to re-appear in Court, he had to stand by his old clients.

After father had given up practice, many of his old clients continued to come, begging him to make an exception in their case, but father always refused. The exorbitant fees they offered did not move him. Once a client came with a lakh of rupees as fees for a case in which he wanted father to appear. Scornfully my father looked at it and then looking at me as I stood nearby, he said, "Well, Beti, do you think it would be right for me to accept this case?" I did not know what to say and hesitated for a few seconds. I knew father had very little money then and the sum would have come in very handy, but it did not seem right. So I merely said, "No, father, I don't think you should." He gave my hand a quick clasp as though he was proud of my decision and turning to his old client said, "I'm sorry. You see even my daughter objects." I had a feeling later on that father asked me just to see whether I would prove to be the kind of daughter he wanted me to be, or whether I would succumb to temptation and prove unworthy of him.

I had never been away from home without my family nor had I travelled alone. So father did not know what to do, to let me go alone to Europe or to cancel my passage also. He talked the matter over with me and said I could do as I liked. I hesitated and was torn between two desires. I did not like the idea of going alone specially as I had so looked forward to travelling with father, but I had a feeling that if I did not take my chance then, I might never get one in the near future. So I decided to go, and I think it was a wise decision.

Mother was most distressed and annoyed at

father for having allowed me to decide on such a step myself. She thought it highly improper for a young woman to travel all alone to a strange country. She tried to dissuade me from going. I did not wish to hurt her but I wanted very much to go. After a great deal of discussion I sailed for Europe unchaperoned for the first time in my life—a little afraid and a little excited at the prospect of the new life before me. The first few days I was very lonely and unhappy, but I quickly made friends and time passed pleasantly on board the ship. There were some friends aboard who took it upon themselves to act as my guardians, I being alone and unprotected. Every time they saw me speak to a young man—there were quite a few on the boat—they gave me a lecture saying it was most dangerous to become friendly with strange men. On the stroke of ten I had to go to bed every night. I submitted to this programme for a few days but later rebelled. The result was I had to put up with more sermons and dark looks which I survived and remained unscathed.

Jawahar was living in Geneva at the time and was to have met me at Brindisi. Having missed his train he did not arrive. I was overcome with a terrible sense of loneliness and had it not been for some of my new friends who got off the boat with me, I should have been utterly miserable.

Jawahar met me at Naples. We did not go straight to Geneva but we visited Rome, Florence and other cities en route. I fell in love with much that I saw. I had read a great deal about Rome, Florence and other towns. The glory of ancient Rome never failed to thrill me. It was during this trip that I saw a lot of Jawahar whom I found an ideal companion and a most delightful guide. He was no longer the big brother of whom I stood greatly in awe. He was a loved companion and the few

days we spent together sight-seeing were very happy indeed.

In Geneva we had a flat. I had never lived in anything so small before and was rather thrilled with it. But after a while I did not like it quite so much and missed the large rooms and spacious grounds of Anard Bhawan. About a week after my arrival Jawahar presented me with a map of Geneva and an English-French Dictionary as well as a book containing bus and tram coupons. I was told that that was all I required to get along by myself and the sooner I started doing this on my own the better it would be for me. I was also told that as Kamala was unwell I should have to do the house-keeping. Though I did not find it very easy at first, it was good training and I soon got used to it. I knew very little French in those days and the little which I had learnt at school was as good as not knowing any at all. I was rather taken aback by my brother's ultimatum but I knew it was no good arguing with him. So I meekly submitted and tried to make the best of a bad job. The very first thing I did was to start learning French from a young and charming Swiss girl who later on became a very dear friend of mine. Our maid, Marguerite, initiated me into the mysteries of house-keeping and we got on well together. Life was not as difficult as I had at first imagined though a minor crisis would arise now and again.

There was an International Summer School in Geneva and people from all parts of the world seemed to congregate there, especially students who had come on their summer vacations. There were Indians, Chinese, Ceylonese, Americans, French and German and many other nationalities. Jawahar joined it and after some time I too joined it. I made many friends there. The lectures were given by well-known statesmen who were there at that time

attending the sessions of the League of Nations, and by Professors from Oxford, Cambridge and other Universities and some famous authors also. The lectures were interesting, but apart from that, they gave us the chance of meeting all types of peoples from all parts of the world.

During week-ends the school organised excursions and often Jawahar and I accompanied the others when Kamala's health permitted our leaving her. On one of these excursions we had decided to go to a mountain called the Col de Voza. We were a very merry party, mostly Americans and Swiss. Jawahar, a Sindhi student and I were the only Indians. Our Sindhi friend was a bit of a fop, always meticulously dressed and aware of it too. The rest of us put on breeches and pullovers and thick hob-nailed boots, but our friend the Sindhi (he is a high I.C.S. official now somewhere in India) came dressed in smart tweeds with posh shoes on! We went by train, then by funicular and then started to climb towards our destination. After a couple of hours of stiff climbing, we were confronted by rain, sleet and snow and got thoroughly drenched. Our Sindhi friend had had a tough time trying to climb as his shoes kept slipping every now and then, not being equal to the strain of mountaineering. Jawahar who never went out on excursions unless he was well equipped with bandages, iodine and other necessary articles suddenly brought out a pair of rope-soled shoes and gave it to our friend. That helped him somewhat out of his difficulties.

After walking for another hour soaked to the skin, we came across a hot and sunny patch of mountain side covered with fresh snow. Though very tired the sight of fresh snow proved too tempting for some of our party including Jawahar. In batches of two's and three's they sat one behind the other and kept sliding down the slope again

and again. I was too tired so I just sat and watched. Jawahar was preparing for yet another slide when one of the students in trying to sit behind him gave a little push and Jawahar started sliding down alone before he was prepared. At the edge of the slope was an enormous precipice and unable to control himself Jawahar headed straight for it! We all held our breath and in those few seconds I seemed to die a million times. Jawahar knew he was going nearer and yet nearer the precipice and he tried to keep his presence of mind. With a super-human effort he tried to turn himself on to his side and succeeded in doing so. He landed on some rocky bits jutting out of the snow. That saved him though his face and arms were badly scratched. It had all happened in a few minutes but I felt terribly weak about the knees for hours afterwards.

After this episode, we quietly went to the hut nearby where a huge fire was burning and gathered around it. Our Sindhi friend along with the rest of us put his smart shoes to dry near the fire. After some time when he went to look at his shoes he found them shrivelled up and unwearable! It caused him much unhappiness, more so as our thick boots had dried up without damage.

Then we had some wholesome food given to us by the old couple who owned the place and as we could not return that night, we occupied the new chalet belonging to the old couple. The men slept on the floor and two girls shared a bed as there were not enough beds for all of us. As it was bitterly cold the girl with me called Molly suggested that if I held up the bed clothes she would warm the inside with a candle. Nothing daunted I agreed and held up the covering while Molly passed the candle to and fro warming the bed. We soon smelt something burning and to our horror discovered a hole in the sheet. We blew out the candle and crept into the

bed thankful that we had not burnt the hut itself. Next day we started for home rather weary and sore and glad to get back.

Sometimes I accompanied my brother on his visits to Romain Rolland who lived at Villeneuve not far from Geneva. I also met many other famous authors, musicians and scientists. Those who stand out in my memory are Einstein and Ernst Toller. The former I did not actually meet but he was present at a lecture I attended given by Sir J. C. Bose. He sat hidden behind other people on the dais but no one even knew that he was there till an American student spotted him and passed the news around. Then there was a general uproar and every one clamoured to see him. After a great deal of persuasion he came and greeted everybody shyly and seemed most embarrassed at the demonstration of affection and admiration shown to him. He remained but a few seconds on the platform and then hurried away somewhere to the background.

I met Toller in Brussels. He was not very striking to look at, but had amazing eyes that seemed to read your innermost thoughts and was very charming to talk to. Often his face would look immeasurably sad and his eyes would have a haunted look about them.

A victim of the Nazi regime Toller had to leave his country and seek refuge in other lands. He was a great poet. His two great passions were truth and devotion to the cause of freedom. He was one of the most fearless men I have come across. If he believed in a certain thing and if his conscience told him that it was right, nothing could prevent him from doing it.

Broken and disillusioned, an exile from the land of his birth he committed suicide and thus ended a brilliant career. The world is all the poorer by his death, but neither his works nor Toller himself can

die. They will remain immortal throughout the ages.

After a few months in Geneva we went to a hill station called Montana. It was small, almost a village, but very pretty. We stayed there many months and it was there that I first took part in winter sports. I learnt to ski and skate and was fascinated by the former at which I spent many delightful hours.

While we were in Montana, Jawahar and I used to take trips every now and again to Paris, Belgium, Germany and sometimes to England. I never did take to England but I loved France and specially Paris. We used to go either for some conference or just for a short pleasure trip. At first Jawahar used to go alone. Later he offered to take me if I could be useful and act as his secretary. I was thrilled at the prospect of going with him but a little dismayed at acting secretary, for Jawahar is a hard task master and does not stand inefficiency. However the offer was too tempting and I straight-away borrowed Jawahar's typewriter and set to work on it to equip myself for the future. From then onwards I accompanied him on almost all trips. It was quite an education in itself, but not always as much fun as I had thought it would be. Jawahar never spared me for he thought hard work was always good for one and according to him I had never done any before. He said I had had too easy an existence and a little roughing would improve me enormously. I am sure it did.

When Jawahar was not very busy he would take me round visiting museums, art galleries and the like. Sometimes we trudged along all day. Whenever I felt tired and suggested our taking it easy by doing the rest of our sight-seeing by taxi, Jawahar would consent on condition that we gave up the idea of going to the theatre at night. To him too much

luxury all at once was very bad for one. Sullenly I gave in and preferred to tramp rather than miss the theatre that evening. I must admit it was good training and the sort of thing I would never have gone through in India. At times I almost hated my brother for inflicting what I thought were unnecessary hardships on me.

Wherever I went I made many friends of all nationalities, mostly students and artists. I had been brought up with the utmost freedom and had been taught not to differentiate between girls and boys. In fact I was very much of a tom-boy myself and my mother often had to chide me for it. The freedom with which boys and girls mixed was nothing new or strange to me and I never felt shy or awkward with the people I met. I made some very good friends and we never failed to correspond with each other throughout the years until a year after the present war broke out. After that, gradually one by one I lost trace of my friends as the Nazi hordes swept over their countries. I often wonder where they are now, whether in concentration camps or fleeing from place to place as helpless refugees. They used to be so full of life these friends of mine, so unafraid of the future which they thought they were going to mould into a brave new world of peace and plenty. But it was not to be. Their dreams were rudely shattered and who knows if they will ever be recaptured.

The happiest time I spent was in Switzerland and Paris. Often I have wished I could go back to those days when life was carefree and joyous and meet old friends again. But though plans were made again and again they never materialised. And I never went back.

Early in 1927 the League against Imperialism was held in Brussels and Jawahar was asked to attend it as the representative of the Indian National



Congress. I accompanied him as usual. People came from all parts of the world, from far off China, Java, Syria, Palestine, Africa, America and a great many other countries. Some of the most inspiring and moving speeches were made by the American and African Negro representatives.

It was here that I met Virendra Chattopadhyaya, Sarojini Naidu's brother for the first time. He was popularly known as 'Uncle Chatto.' An exile for a great many years from his motherland, having wandered alone from one country to another without a home or financial means, he lived a hand to mouth existence. He had not become embittered as many might have done and did do so. On the contrary he always had a smile on his face and a word of good cheer for everybody. He was clever, gentle, charming and one of the most lovable characters I have ever met. I became very fond of him as he did of me, and the more I saw of him the more my respect and admiration for him increased. Even when stark hunger faced him round the corner he never lost courage. Many a time when all he had for his lunch was a couple of apples he would insist on sharing it with some poor Indian student who was also hard up. When we went to Berlin in October 1927 we met Chatto again and saw a great deal of him. We had all become fond of him and he in turn gave us all his affection. Perhaps it was because after many years he met some people who gave him the feeling of being one of their family and not an outcast.

The evening we left Berlin he came to see us off at the station. Hardened though he was to loneliness and a wanderer's existence he was very upset at bidding us good-bye. As he stood on the platform saying good-bye to me, his eyes dimmed with tears. "Krishna, I wonder if it is to be *au revoir* or good-bye. I hope I shall see you again or who knows I

may even come up to the borders of Hindustan to have a glimpse of you." I was deeply moved and almost on the verge of tears for I had a feeling that I would never see him again. As the train moved out of the station I waved to him till I could see him no longer. I remember the last smile on his lips which quivered though he tried not to show it. And so we parted leaving him a lonely, desolate figure on the platform—we to our home of comfort and security and he back to his life of hardship, uncertainty and loneliness. Off and on since then Jawahar and I heard from Uncle Chatto. And then news stopped coming. There were rumours of all kinds, some that he was alive and in great distress and poverty, others that he had been arrested and shot in Russia. What actually happened nobody knows. Whether he is alive or dead is still a mystery.

There were many other revolutionaries whom we met in Berlin and other cities. I loved to sit and hear stories of their various activities and was filled with deep admiration for their courage. They had sacrificed a great deal and suffered much, and on top of it financial difficulties were a constant problem. Yet they continued to live as best and as cheerfully as they could in spite of the odds against them. All over the world these exiles are scattered—fine men and brave beyond one's imagination and yet how many in our country know of them or knowing of them give them even a thought?

Another very lovable and interesting person who stands out in my memory is Dhan Gopal Mukherji. He was a young Bengali author who had run away from his home in India and after many exciting adventures had reached America which he had made his home. He had studied at college by working during his spare hours and thus earning his college fees. After leaving college he started writing books. Unfortunately in India, little is

known of his writings. His book "The Face of Silence," "Cast and Outcaste" and "My Brother's Face" are some of the best I have read. He also wrote some delightful books for children such as "Gay Neck," "Kari the Elephant" and many others.

We were in Geneva when one day we received a letter from Dhan Gopal. It was addressed to my brother, but as he was in England at the time Kamala opened it. Dhan Gopal wanted to meet us. So Kamala wrote back saying Jawahar was away but he was welcome to come any time he liked. Two days later at about five o'clock in the evening the bell rang. It was the maid's day off, so I opened the door and found a young man outside. I asked him what he wanted and he said he had come to see Mrs. and Miss Nehru. I looked at him doubtfully and asked who he was. He said he was Dhan Gopal Mukherji. I almost collapsed because for some unknown reason both Kamala and I had imagined him to be an oldish man with a beard and long-flowing robes! But there was a very young good-looking man with a broad American accent and very friendly eyes. Trying to hide my astonishment I let him in and went to inform Kamala. After a few minutes we returned to the living room to find Dhan Gopal on his knees trying to light up the fire that had died out. He got up as we entered and said "Hullo there—you folks don't mind my making things a little cosier, do you?" He smiled and with that smile he won both Kamala and me over as he did most people. From then onwards life was one long surprise where Dhan Gopal was concerned. Sometimes he would turn up with flowers or fruits, sometimes with vegetables which he insisted on cooking in the Bengali way, but which was not Bengali at all. He would often take me out for walks and to my horror as soon as he felt warm he would take off his coat and waist coat no matter where he was, bundle it

under his arm and continue walking. He always told me that I was much too restless to be an Indian and that I should sit and meditate for half an hour each morning to gain more poise and calm! He had many idiosyncrasies but he was the most lovable and delightful person I ever met. We corresponded for many years. In 1932 Dhan Gopal came to India for a brief visit. He had lost some of his youthfulness and *joie de vivre*. Life had been rather a disillusionment. He was not doing very well as an author and he was disappointed. Dhan Gopal had married an American woman and had a little son Gopal who must now be about 25 years old. His wife was much older than he and was Principal of a large girl's school in New York. She was an exceedingly nice person, clever and efficient. She was the regular earning member of the family and I think it upset Dhan Gopal very much to live on his wife's earnings. From 1932 onwards Dhan Gopal's letters became more and yet more depressing. Then they stopped and in 1935 we heard he had committed suicide by hanging himself.

Dhan Gopal was a very dear friend of ours. His death came as a great blow to Jawahar, Kamala and me. We lost a most faithful friend and India one of her brilliant but unknown sons.

In the summer of 1927 my father came to Europe. I was very happy about it and so was Jawahar as father needed not only rest but a complete change of surroundings. We feared that something might happen again at the last moment to prevent his coming and that once again he might have to cancel his trip. However, nothing happened and he wrote to say he had booked his passage. In his last letter to me before he sailed, he wrote "You and Bhai (Jawahar) have both been insisting on my taking a holiday in Europe and at this end Swarup and Ranjit are doing the same and at last I find it

possible to get away in the near future. I am a bit tired with the public work that I have been doing for the last seven years and it is disturbing to find at the end of this long period that I have failed to advance the cause of the country in any appreciable way. So I have decided to take a holiday and no longer deny myself the pleasure of being with all of you." In the same letter referring to something I had written about the Brussels Conference (The League against Imperialism) father wrote "I have received and read with pleasure your account of the Brussels Conference and your impressions of it. You seem to have turned into quite a little politician, but do not think that being a girl will in any way be a handicap to you. Many women have taken as great a part in the uplift of their country as any man has done and some have distinguished themselves much more than men. It is all a question of one's feeling towards one's country and how seriously one applies oneself to the work of uplift. There is no bar of sex—on the contrary a determined woman's influence is much greater than a man can ever sway. So there is every chance for you. You must remember that true patriotism is in your blood and unless you actively suppress it, it is bound to assert itself sooner or later."

He arrived in September 1927. It was a joy to have him with us and he was delighted to be with his children after a year's separation. In contrast to the time I had spent with Jawahar, studying, acting his secretary and being generally useful and helpful all round, I spent the following months with father in a lazy, luxurious way. I confess I enjoyed it thoroughly though on the whole I am glad I did not have too much of it.

We went to London together and stayed at a hotel where father had stayed many many years ago, when he had taken Jawahar to Harrow. After

our arrival I went to the hall porter to ask if there were any letters for us. "What name, please, Miss?" "Nehru" I said. For a few seconds he continued to look in the pigeon holes for letters muttering "Nehru" to himself. Then suddenly he turned round to me and said, "I knew a gentleman called Nehru a great many years ago, Miss. He was a very rich and very fine gentleman and his wife, a lovely lady. Their young son used to go to Harrow. Could you be related to them, Miss?" I was rather thrilled and beaming at the astonished porter I told him that my father was the same gentleman who stayed there once and the other slightly bald gentleman was the young lad who used to go to Harrow! The old porter was delighted and was exceptionally attentive to us after this. It was remarkable the way he remembered our name after those many years and I was both surprised and touched by it.

Wherever we stayed with father we were treated right royally. No sooner did we arrive at a hotel than the manager sent flowers with the compliments. He then came himself to see that we were comfortable. Everyone hovered around us all the time and I for one enjoyed this change for a short while.

Once father was going to London alone and the rest of us were staying on in Paris. He asked me what I would like from London and I told him I had wanted a short leather coat for a very long time. Jawahar had not thought it necessary so I had not been able to get one. Father promised to get it for me but forgot to take my size. When he reached London he went to Selfridges one day and demanded to see the manager. The manager came and father quite calmly told him that he wanted to buy a leather coat for his daughter. As he did not know the exact size could the manager kindly arrange to have a few shop girls lined up, about 5 ft. 2 inches tall so that they could try on the coat and then

father could judge whether it would fit me or not. The manager was rather taken aback at this unusual request. As father insisted he decided to humour him. Thus father bought me a lovely coat and seemed quite unconcerned about the method of choosing it. He did not think it either wrong or unusual. When he told us the story Kamala and I were much amused but Jawahar was furious. He thought it was very wrong of father to have done such a thing just because he knew he could get away with it.

In November 1927 we were all in Berlin on a short visit, Jawahar wanted to go to Moscow to attend the 10th anniversary celebrations of the Russian Revolution for which both he and father had received invitations. I was very eager to go too, so was Kamala. At first father thought it was an unnecessary trip as we had only a week at our disposal to spend in Russia before we returned to Marseilles to catch our boat. Jawahar was keen and so father gave in. All of us went to Moscow. It was a tiresome and uncomfortable journey and at times father was quite put out by it.

Moscow looked grim and dull and yet the men and women one met there, dressed in coarse simple clothes seemed to have something within them—some inner glow that made them interesting and pleasing to look at. They were full of quiet determination and a firm resolve to bear all suffering and sacrifices in order to make their country the greatest and the best in the world.

We stayed at the Grand Hotel. It was a huge place with enormous rooms. All the furniture belonging to the time of the Czar's was covered up with thick coarse cloth so that it had nothing of the bourgeois atmosphere about it. It was bitterly cold. When I rang for the maid in the morning and asked for some hot water for a bath, she stared at